

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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R 091410Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8741
INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 1225

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FI

SUBJECT: SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS I: SDP ELECTS NEW GENERATION
OF LEADERS

REF: HELSINKI A-85,MAY 19, 1975

1. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP) CONGRESS JUNE 5-8 RESULTED
IN EXPECTED GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN SDP LEADERSHIP. PRIME
MINISTER SORSA, WHO HAD BEEN SDP SECRETARY-GENERAL SINCE 1969,
WAS ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY AND WITHOUT OPPOSITION AS NEW CHAIRMAN
OF THE PARTY. THIS IS FIRST TIME IN PARTY'S HISTORY THAT
SECRETARY-GENERAL HAS BEEN ELECTED CHAIRMAN.

2. MINISTER OF EDUCATION SUNDQVIST SUCCEEDS SORSA AS
SECRETARY-GENERAL. SORSA ACTUALLY DID NOT MAKE HIS
CHOICE FOR PARTY SECRETARY KNOWN UNTIL THE MEETING OF THE
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CONGRESS' NOMINATING COMMITTEE IN THE EVENING OF THE

FIRST DAY OF THE CONGRESS, JUNE 5. SUNDQVIST, DESPITE HIS TENDER AGE OF 30, HAS ALREADY SERVED AS MINISTER FOR THREE YEARS AND MP FOR FIVE. HE FIRST MADE HIS CAREER THROUGH THE YOUTH AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND WAS CONSIDERED QUITE RADICAL. OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS HE HAS MELLOWED SOMEWHAT AND IT IS EXPECTED THAT HE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE MODERATE AS TIME GOES BY. NOMINATION COMMITTEE PROPOSED ONLY SUNDQVIST AND HIS ELECTION WAS UNANIMOUS, SINCE NONE OF HIS MANY COMPETITORS, AMONG THEM PLANNING SECRETARY LIPPONEN, DEMARI CHIEF EDITOR KAIRAMO, AND MP AHDE, CHOSE TO CHALLENGE HIM. ALL OF THESE CANDIDATES ARE BASICALLY FROM THE SAME GROUP OF YOUNG, EDUCATED, LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTY ACTIVISTS THAT HAVE RISEN FAST DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS IN PARTY HIERARCHY. SOME OF THE OTHER CANDIDATES HAD ENTERTAINED HOPES OF SUCCESS UNTIL THE FINAL MOMENT AND WERE QUITE SHATTERED BY THE OUTCOME -- LIPPONEN TO THE EXTENT THAT HE MAY BE LEAVING ACTIVE PARTY WORK. CHOICE OF SUNDQVIST SIGNALS SLIGHT CHANGE OF COURSE FOR THE SDP TO THE LEFT. AS SOME DELEGATES TO THE SDP CONGRESS TOLD POLCOUNS, SOSA MAY YET COME TO RUE HIS CHOICE OF SUNDQVIST SINCE HE, IN THEIR OPINION, HAS CHOSEN A COMPETITOR RATHER THAN A COLLABORATOR.

3. THE POSITION OF SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN, TRADITIONALLY RESERVED FOR A WOMAN, WAS THE ONLY OPENLY CONTESTED LEADERSHIP QUESTION. SUNDQVIST HAD BEEN PROPOSED ALSO FOR THIS POSITION, BUT THE SURPRISE CAME NOT SO MUCH IN HIS DEFEAT AS IN THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF MP PIIRKKO TYOLAJARVI, WHO DEFEATED FORMER VICE CHAIRMAN MARGIT ESKMAN BY 281-76. MRS. TYOLAJARVI IS 37 YEARS OLD AND HAS A DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION. ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT ONLY IN 1972, SHE HAS NOT PLAYED PROMINENT ROLE IN PARTY AFFAIRS AND WAS FAIRLY UNKNOWN. SHE IS EVEN MORE CLEARLY THAN SUNDQVIST CONSIDERED TO BE A LEFTIST IN THE SDP, AND THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY WITH WHICH SHE WAS ELECTED VICE CHAIRMAN REFLECTS THE MAKE-UP OF THE DELEGATES ATTENDING THE CONGRESS.

4. BOTH SUNDQVIST AND TYOLAJARVI HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN
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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, PARTICULARLY NORDIC RELATIONS. SUNDQVIST, IN HIS ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL ROLE FOR SDP. SINCE THE NEW CHAIRMAN ALSO HAS BACKGROUND IN INTERNATIONAL MATTERS, IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT SDP WILL PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AS SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL.

5. THE ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OLDER GENERATION IN THE TOP SDP LEADERSHIP, VICE CHAIRMAN VEIKKO HELLE, WHO IS 63 AND FROM THE RIGHT-OF-CENTER WING OF THE PARTY, WAS RE-ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. THE SDP PARTY EXECUTIVE, WHICH IS MADE UP OF 9 FULL MEMBERS -- INCLUDING TOP PARTY LEADERSHIP -- AND 5 DEPUTY MEMBERS REMAINED MORE OR LESS UNCHANGED. MORE IMPORTANTLY, FORMER CHAIRMAN PAASIO RETAINED A SEAT ON THE EXECUTIVE AND IS EXPECTED TO PERFORM A MODERATING AND RESTRAINING FUNCTION AT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WEEKLY POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING MEETINGS.

7. TRADE UNION MOVEMENT LOST ONE OF TWO SEATS IT HAD HELD AND WAS QUITE UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS DEVELOPMENT. SUNDQVIST, IN HIS SPEECH, WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO TRY TO REASSURE TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES THAT SDP STILL CONSIDERED LABOR UNION MOVEMENT AS BACKBONE OF PARTY AND WOULD WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SUPPORT IT IN ITS STRUGGLES, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY THE UPCOMING DO OR DIE FIGHT WITH THE COMMUNISTS TO RETAIN CONTROL OVER THE METAL-WORKERS UNION.

8. THE SDP YOUTH ORGANIZATION ALSO CAME AWAY DIS-SATISFIED. SUNDQVIST HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ITS REPRESENTATIVE ON PARTY EXECUTIVE AND YOUTH ORGANIZATION DESPERATELY TRIED TO HAVE CONGRESS ACCEPT ANOTHER YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE TO SUCCEED HIM, BUT FAILED. GIVEN THE MAKE-UP OF THE CONGRESS DELEGATES THIS CLEARLY INDICATES THAT WHEREAS PARTY IS TURNING LEFT IT IS DOING SO WITH MODERATION. IT ALSO REFLECTS THE RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE OF THE SDP YOUTH ORGANIZATION AND POINTS UP ONE OF THE PARTY'S MAIN PROBLEMS, ITS INABILITY TO

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ATTRACT THE YOUTH.

9. SEPTELS WILL FOLLOW ON INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER PROGRAM RESOLUTIONS.

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